UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
LIMITED

A/AC.109/L.1816
15 June 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION
WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING
OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL
COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON SMALL TERRITORIES, PETITIONS, INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

Rapporteur: Ms. Cecilia MACKENNA (Chile)

QUESTION OF DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ON DECOLONIZATION

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1 - 2	2
II.	CONSULTATIONS WITH THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION	3	2
III.	CONSULTATIONS WITH THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS	4 - 14	2
IV.	WEEK OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLES OF ALL COLONIAL TERRITORIES, AS WELL AS THOSE IN SOUTH AFRICA, FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM, INDEPENDENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS (23-27 MAY 1994)	15 - 17	4
V.	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	18	6

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In accordance with its programme of work for 1994, adopted at its 674th meeting, on 12 April 1994, the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance considered the question of dissemination of information on decolonization at its 681st, 682nd, 683rd and 685th meetings, on 16, 19, 23 and 26 May 1994, respectively.

2. In its consideration of the item, the Subcommittee held consultations with representatives of the Department of Public Information and of the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat in the area of dissemination of information on decolonization.

II. CONSULTATIONS WITH THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

3. In his statement before the Subcommittee, the representative of the Department of Public Information reviewed the multimedia activities of the Department, which included the issuance and dissemination of press releases and United Nations publications, and the production and distribution of radio and television programmes. He also drew attention to the relevant activities carried out by the United Nations information centres. The Department continued to disseminate information materials to more than 1,300 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) associated with the United Nations. Further, it responded to public inquiries and complied with requests for information on decolonization by distributing, as handouts or through the mail, publications, pamphlets, booklets and brochures.

III. CONSULTATIONS WITH THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS

4. The representative of the Department of Political Affairs reviewed the activities of the Department in 1993. There had been an acceleration of activities following the implementation of specific measures called for by relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. By its resolutions 47/24 of 11 December 1992 and 48/53 of 10 December 1993, the most recent on the dissemination of information, the Assembly, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to continue to take concrete measures through all the media at his disposal, including publications, radio and television, to give widespread and continuous publicity to the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization.

5. The activities of the Department of Political Affairs in 1993 had included, as in previous years, three major elements. First, the production of the Decolonization bulletin series; secondly, oral dissemination of information through speeches and lectures at conferences organized by universities and various professional groups; and thirdly, the systematic distribution of documents on decolonization issues, particularly in connection with regional

seminars. The Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Public Information had closely coordinated the above activities.

6. With regard to the first element, three bulletins had been issued during 1993. Decolonization bulletin No. 44 outlined the political and constitutional development of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (Micronesia); No. 45 covered the work of the Special Committee in 1992 and of the General Assembly (Fourth Committee) at its forty-seventh session; and No. 46 covered the regional seminars organized by the Special Committee on decolonization within the context of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (St. George's, Grenada, 17-19 June 1992 and Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, 8-10 June 1993). Steps had already been taken towards the publication of a further series of bulletins.

7. An important component of the Department's activities had been to provide substantive advice to the Department of Public Information in the preparation of published materials, such as articles on decolonization, which had subsequently appeared in the UN Chronicle. The Department had also cooperated with the Department of Public Information in the preparation of a number of pamphlets on various aspects of decolonization. Prior to publication, these information materials had been carefully reviewed, verified and updated by the Department of Political Affairs. Following past practice, the Department contributed articles covering trusteeship and decolonization questions to the 1992 edition of the Yearbook of the United Nations.

8. The representative of the Department said that the Department of Public Information had helped to publicize the decolonization work of the United Nations among the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories. In this connection, he mentioned that the regional seminars organized by the Special Committee during the past three years had all recommended that measures should be taken to increase the flow of information between the United Nations and the Territories in both the Pacific and the Caribbean regions. He emphasized the excellent cooperation between his Department and the Department of Public Information.

9. The Department had also cooperated with the Department of Public Information in disseminating information to the people of the Non-Self-Governing Territories through the various United Nations information centres. This had facilitated a two-way flow of information between the Territories and the Department of Public Information which, through the information centres, had been providing valuable feedback on its activities in the field of decolonization. The information centres had conducted their activities as best they could within the resources available to them, given the financial situation.

10. The representative of the Department said that the information centres could play a valuable role in obtaining information on the Non-Self-Governing Territories through direct visits and contacts. In the absence of visiting missions, such regular visits would be of great benefit both to the Organization and to the Territories concerned.

11. Staff of the Special Committee secretariat had been very active in the oral dissemination of information through speeches and lectures at seminars and symposia organized by universities or socio-professional groups, both in New York and elsewhere in the United States.

12. The Department of Political Affairs also attached great importance to the distribution of documents dealing with decolonization issues. The staff of the Department had taken particular care to reply to individual requests for information and documents on the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization.

13. The representative of the Department of Political Affairs said that the regional seminars on decolonization organized regularly by the United Nations in compliance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly had served as a most efficient and important channel for the dissemination of information on decolonization. United Nations documents had been distributed widely during the regional seminars held in Grenada in 1992 and in Papua New Guinea in 1993. In this connection, he mentioned the seminar in Papua New Guinea in which many Non-Self-Governing Territories and some administering Powers had been represented. That seminar had provided the participants with a unique forum for exchanging views and an excellent opportunity for sharing information on the Territories concerned.

14. The representative of the Department of Political Affairs said that the Department would take into consideration the guidelines and recommendations the Subcommittee would make at the conclusion of its current session.

IV. WEEK OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLES OF ALL COLONIAL TERRITORIES, AS WELL AS THOSE IN SOUTH AFRICA, FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM, INDEPENDENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS (23-27 MAY 1994)

15. In accordance with its programme of work for 1994, adopted at its 674th meeting, on 12 April 1994, the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance considered the question of the Week of Solidarity at its 685th meeting, on 26 May 1994.

16. The Chairman of the Subcommittee made the following statement on the occasion of the Week of Solidarity:

> "In 1972, the General Assembly, in its resolution 2911 (XXVII), addressed an appeal to the Governments and peoples of the world to observe annually a Week of Solidarity with the Colonial Peoples of Southern Africa. The Week was to start on 25 May, which marked Africa Liberation Day.
>
> "In 1982, the General Assembly expanded the scope of the Week of Solidarity to include its support for the peoples of all colonial Territories, as well as those in South Africa, fighting for freedom, independence and human rights. This was in full accord with the purposes and tenets embodied in the Charter of the United Nations and in conformity

with the principles enshrined in the historic Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

"During the past decades, through the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the decolonization process has accelerated spectacularly. A large number of the former colonies have been able to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and millions of men and women have finally been able to pursue their own destinies.

"All these accomplishments would have been unthinkable had it not been for the historic foresight of the peoples of the United Nations, which had manifested itself in the momentous Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

"The most remarkable achievement of the decolonization process during the past decade has been Namibia's advent to independence through the successful exercise by its people of their right to self-determination in free and fair elections under the control and supervision of the United Nations.

"This year, solidarity and support for the people of South Africa helped bring about the successful outcome of the first democratic elections in South Africa that ended decades of apartheid and opened the way to the establishment of a united, non-racial and democratic society in that country. On 10 May, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and other world leaders joined the people of South Africa to celebrate one of the happiest days in Africa's history, the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as the first democratically elected State President of the Republic of South Africa.

"Finally, for almost a quarter of a century, the Week of Solidarity stood as a tribute of the United Nations to the courage and perseverance of millions of men and women fighting for freedom, independence and human rights. The Special Committee notes with great satisfaction that the international community's solidarity with and support for the peoples of all colonial Territories, as well as those in South Africa, who had been struggling for freedom, independence and human rights, contributed to the successful achievement of the goals set forth in General Assembly resolution 2911 (XXVII).

"On the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we hail these fundamental achievements of the world Organization in the field of decolonization and project our vision of the future world, the world striding towards the cherished and noble goal of eradicating colonialism by the year 2000."

17. The Subcommittee expressed the view that the commemoration of the Week of Solidarity should continue as long as there were peoples who had not yet exercised their right to self-determination.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

18. Having concluded its examination of the item, the Subcommittee submits the following conclusions and recommendations for action by the Special Committee:

(1) The Special Committee reiterates the importance of effecting the widest possible dissemination of accurate information on decolonization to further the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960) and to mobilize world public opinion in support of the peoples of colonial Territories in their efforts to achieve self-determination, freedom and independence.

(2) The Special Committee reiterates the great importance it attaches to the work of the Department of Political Affairs. The Committee urges the Department to continue to discharge its mandate, taking into account all the Territories under the consideration of the Committee.

(3) While noting the active participation of the Department of Public Information in the work of the Special Committee and its efforts to produce and disseminate information on decolonization, to monitor the responses received from the United Nations information centres and to report thereon, the Committee requests the Department:

(a) To continue, through all the means at its disposal, its work of publicity in the field of decolonization, basing its activities in this regard on the Charter of the United Nations; the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples; the Plan of Action for the Full Implementation of the Declaration contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 35/118 of 11 December 1980; Assembly resolution 46/181 of 19 December 1991, entitled "International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism", and the proposals contained in the report of the Secretary-General, dated 13 December 1991, 1/ to serve as a plan of action therefor; the items on the agenda of the Special Committee; and all relevant resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and of other organs of the United Nations active in the field of decolonization;

(b) To underline in all its activities that, despite major achievements in the process of decolonization, colonialism has not been completely eradicated and that the activities of the United Nations in this field should be given high priority until all the goals of the Declaration have been achieved;

(c) To continue to disseminate, particularly through parliamentary bodies, NGOs, mass media and universities, resolutions and decisions of the United Nations on decolonization, including those adopted by the Special Committee, as well as other basic materials concerning decolonization, and to distribute them, especially through United Nations information centres, in local languages when appropriate, in particular in those regions where there are still Non-Self-Governing Territories, and in countries that are administering Powers;

(d) To adopt measures aimed at providing full coverage of all activities of relevant United Nations bodies in the field of decolonization in press releases in both English and French;

(e) To utilize materials pertaining to the participation of specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system in the decolonization process, and to distribute those materials, as appropriate, through the United Nations information centres.

(4) The Special Committee requests the Department of Public Information to provide it with feedback reports from the United Nations information centres regarding their dissemination of information on decolonization.

(5) The Special Committee requests the Department of Public Information, in cooperation with the Department of Political Affairs, to continue with its speaking engagements at university campuses on the subject of decolonization and to inform the Subcommittee on the experience and the results achieved.

(6) The Special Committee requests the Department of Public Information and the Department of Political Affairs to continue to take into consideration the important role being played by NGOs in the decolonization process and in the dissemination of information on the situation in all the remaining colonial Territories under consideration by the Committee.

Notes

1/ See A/46/634/Rev.1.